

## IN THE CLAIMS

1.               (Withdrawn)               A method of ordering visual objects presented on a display comprising:  
                  comparing visual objects to be placed in an overlapping condition;  
determining from the comparison the order in which said visual objects are to be placed; and  
                  re-ordering and placing the visual objects in said overlapping condition in accordance with said determination.
2.               (Withdrawn)               The method of claim 1 wherein during said comparing, a metric of each visual object is compared to determine a relative size of each said visual object.
3.               (Withdrawn)               The method of claim 2 wherein during said determining, visual objects are placed in order from smallest to largest with smaller visual objects being placed in front of larger visual objects.
4.               (Withdrawn)               The method of claim 3 wherein said metric is the area of a rectangular region surrounding each visual object.
5.               (Withdrawn)               The method of claim 1 wherein said comparing, determining and re-ordering are performed automatically when a visual object is brought into an overlapping condition with another visual object during visual object manipulation.
6.               (Withdrawn)               The method of claim 5 wherein during said comparing, a metric of each visual object is compared to determine a relative size of each said visual object.
7.               (Withdrawn)               The method of claim 6 wherein during said determining, visual objects are placed in order from smallest to largest with smaller visual objects being placed in front of larger visual objects.

8. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein said comparing, determining and re-ordering are performed automatically when a visual object is brought into an overlapping condition with another visual object during visual object manipulation and then released.
9. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 8 wherein during said comparing, a metric of each visual object is compared to determine a relative size of each said visual object.
10. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 9 wherein during said determining, visual objects are placed in order from smallest to largest with smaller visual objects being placed in front of larger visual objects.
11. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein said comparing, determining and re-ordering are performed in response to a user input command.
12. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 11 wherein during said comparing, a metric of each visual object is compared to determine a relative size of each said visual object.
13. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 12 wherein during said determining, visual objects are placed in order from smallest to largest with smaller visual objects being placed in front of larger visual objects.

14. (Currently Amended) A method of ~~creating a connecting link between~~ joining displayed source and destination visual objects with a connector, each visual object having a peripheral boundary, said method comprising:
- determining a region ~~within~~ interior of the peripheral boundary of each visual object to be joined and a connecting path extending between the determined regions;
- clipping each end of the connecting path so that the ends of the connecting path ~~terminates at the~~ terminate at locations where the connecting path intersects the peripheral boundary of the source and destination visual objects; and
- displaying a connector ~~extending a connecting link~~ along the clipped connecting path between the source and destination visual objects ~~terminating that terminates~~ at said locations.
15. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein said region is a point within each visual object.
16. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein said point is the center of each visual object.
17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16 wherein said connecting path is a straight line and wherein during said clipping, said straight line is traversed to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.
18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16 wherein said connecting path is a curved line and wherein during said clipping, said curved line is flattened and represented by a series of straight line segments, each straight line segment being traversed to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.
19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16 wherein said connecting path is a self-loop and wherein during said clipping, said self-loop is traversed in clockwise and anti-clockwise directions to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.

20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[17]] 14 further comprising placing an arrowhead on at least one end of said ~~connecting-link~~ connector, said arrowhead having a tip terminating at said location, said ~~connecting-link~~ connector terminating at a backend of said arrowhead.
21. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 20 further comprising placing an arrowhead at each end of said ~~connecting-link~~ connector.
22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 20 wherein said connecting path is a straight line and wherein during said clipping, said straight line is traversed to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.
23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 20 wherein said connecting path is a curved line and wherein during said clipping, said curved line is flattened and represented by a series of straight line segments, each straight line segment being traversed to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.
24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 20 wherein said connecting path is a self-loop and wherein during said clipping, said self-loop is traversed in clockwise and anti-clockwise directions to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.
25. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[17]] 14 wherein said ~~connecting-link~~ connector is represented by a plurality of spaced shapes.
26. (Original) The method of claim 25 wherein said shapes are generally evenly spaced along the length of said connecting path.
27. (Original) The method of claim 26 wherein the shapes along said connecting path are the same.

28. (Original) The method of claim 26 wherein the shapes along said connecting path are different.
29. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 25 wherein said shapes provide semantic meaning to the ~~connecting link joining said visual objects~~ connector.
30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 29 wherein said connecting path is a straight line and wherein during said clipping, said straight line is traversed to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.
31. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 29 wherein said connecting path is a curved line and wherein during said clipping, said curved line is flattened and represented by a series of straight line segments, each straight line segment being traversed to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.
32. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 29 wherein said connecting path is a self-loop and wherein during said clipping, said self-loop is traversed in clockwise and anti-clockwise directions to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.
33. (Withdrawn) A method of creating a connecting link joining source and destination visual objects comprising:  
determining a path for said connecting link between said source and destination visual objects; and  
representing said connecting link by at least one non-line shape.
34. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 33 wherein said shape provides information concerning the relationship between said source and destination visual objects.
35. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 34 wherein said connecting link is represented by a plurality of spaced shapes.

36. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 35 wherein said shapes are generally evenly spaced.
37. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 35 wherein said shapes are the same.
38. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 36 further comprising reorienting the shapes into a generally upright orientation if the shapes become inverted during manipulation of one or more of said source and destination visual objects.
39. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 36 wherein said shapes are generally centered along said path.
40. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 40 wherein said shapes are the same.
41. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 40 wherein said shapes are different.
42. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 40 further comprising reorienting the shapes into a generally upright orientation if the shapes become inverted during manipulation of one or more of said source and destination visual objects.
43. (Withdrawn) An overlapping object tool for ordering visual objects presented on a display comprising:  
means for comparing visual objects to be placed in an overlapping condition;  
means for determining the order in which said visual objects are to be placed based on said comparison; and  
means for re-ordering and placing the visual objects in said overlapping condition in accordance with said determination.
44. (Withdrawn) An overlapping object tool according to claim 44 wherein said comparing means compares a metric of each visual object to determine a relative size of each said visual object.

45. (Withdrawn) An overlapping object tool according to claim 45 wherein said determining means places visual objects in order from smallest to largest with smaller visual objects being placed in front of larger visual objects.

46. (Withdrawn) An overlapping object tool according to claim 46 wherein said metric is the area of a rectangular region surrounding each visual object.

47. (Withdrawn) An overlapping object tool according to claim 46 wherein said metric is the area of a rectangular region surrounding each visual object.

48. (Currently Amended) An object-connecting tool for ~~creating a connecting link between~~ joining displayed source and destination visual objects with a connector, each visual object having a peripheral boundary, said tool comprising:

means for determining a region ~~within~~ interior of the peripheral boundary of each visual object to be joined and a connecting path extending between the determined regions;

means for clipping each end of the connecting path so that the ends of the connecting path ~~terminates at the~~ terminate at locations where the connecting path intersects the peripheral boundary of the source and destination visual objects; and

means for ~~extending a connecting link~~ displaying a connector extending along the clipped connecting path between the source and destination visual objects ~~terminating that terminates~~ at said locations.

49. (Original) An object-connecting tool according to claim 48 wherein said region is a point within each visual object.

50. (Original) An object-connecting tool according to claim 49 wherein said point is the center of each visual object.

51. (Currently Amended) An object-connecting tool according to claim 50 wherein said connecting path is a straight line and wherein said clipping means traverses said straight line to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.

52. (Currently Amended) An object-connecting tool according to claim 50 wherein said connecting path is a curved line and wherein said clipping means flattens said curved line into a series of straight line segments, each straight line segment being traversed to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.

53. (Currently Amended) An object-connecting tool according to claim 50 wherein said connecting path is a self-loop and wherein said clipping means traverses said self-loop in clockwise and anti-clockwise directions to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.



54. (Currently Amended) An object-connecting tool according to claim [[50]]  
48 wherein said ~~connecting link~~ connector is represented by a plurality of spaced shapes.

55. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of~~ An object-connecting tool according  
to claim 54 wherein said shapes are generally evenly spaced along the length of said connecting  
path.

56. (Withdrawn) An object-connecting tool for creating a connecting link  
joining source and destination visual objects comprising:

means for determining a path for said connecting link between said source and  
destination visual objects; and

means for representing said connecting link by at least one non-line shape.

57. (Withdrawn) An object-connecting tool according to claim 55 wherein  
said shape provides information concerning the relationship between said source and destination  
visual objects.

58. (Withdrawn) An object-connecting tool according to claim 56 wherein  
said connecting link is represented by a plurality of spaced shapes.

59. (Withdrawn) An object-connecting tool according to claim 57 wherein  
said shapes are generally evenly spaced.

60. (Withdrawn) A computer readable medium including a computer  
program for ordering visual objects presented on a display, said computer program comprising:  
computer program code for comparing visual objects to be placed in an  
overlapping condition;  
computer program code for determining the order in which said visual objects are  
to be placed based on said comparison; and

computer program code for re-ordering and placing the visual objects in said overlapping condition in accordance with said determination.

61. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium including a computer program tool for ~~creating a connecting link between~~ joining displayed source and destination visual objects with a connector, each visual object having a peripheral boundary, said computer program comprising:

computer program code for determining a region ~~within~~ interior of the peripheral boundary of each visual object to be joined and a connecting path extending between the determined regions;

computer program code for clipping each end of the connecting path so that the ends of the connecting path ~~terminates at the~~ terminate at locations where the connecting path intersects the peripheral boundary of the source and destination visual objects; and

computer program code for ~~extending a connecting link~~ displaying a connector extending along the clipped connecting path between the source and destination visual objects ~~terminating that terminates~~ at said locations.

62. (Withdrawn) A computer readable medium including a computer program for creating a connecting link joining source and destination visual objects, said computer program comprising:

computer program code for determining a path for said connecting link between said source and destination visual objects; and

computer program code for representing said connecting link by at least one non-line shape.

**Please add the following new claims:**

63. (New) An object-connecting tool according to claim 54 wherein the shapes along said connecting path are the same.

64. (New) An object-connecting tool according to claim 54 wherein the shapes along said connecting path are different.

65. (New) An object-connecting tool according to claim 54 wherein said shapes provide semantic meaning to the connector.